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Seventh progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1603 (2005) of 3 June 2005, by which the Council requested me to keep it regularly informed of developments in Côte d'Ivoire and progress in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). The report covers developments since my report of 26 September 2005 (S/2005/604).

II. Political developments

2. National elections in Côte d'Ivoire could not take place on 30 October 2005, as envisaged under the country's constitution, because, as a result of massive delays and blockages in the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis and Pretoria Agreements, essential conditions were not in place. The efforts of national and international stakeholders to advance the peace process during the period under review therefore focused on seeking a major agreement on arrangements to prevent a political crisis at the end of the mandate of the President of Côte d'Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo, on 30 October. In this regard, the Heads of State of the countries members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held an extraordinary meeting in Abuja on 30 September, at which they recommended to the Peace and Security Council of the African Union that new governance arrangements be put in place in Côte d'Ivoire at the end of President Gbagbo's mandate.

3. Based on the recommendation of ECOWAS, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union adopted a decision on 6 October 2005, setting out the post-30 October governance arrangements and measures to revitalize the stalled peace process. The decision, inter alia, stipulated that the arrangements agreed upon in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement should continue from 31 October 2005 for a period not exceeding 12 months, with President Laurent Gbagbo remaining in office as Head of State during this transition period. It further provided for the appointment of a new Prime Minister with full authority over the Council of Ministers.

4. It was also noted that additional measures were required to expedite the implementation of some provisions of the Linas-Marcoussis, Accra III and Pretoria Agreements, in particular the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process; the dismantling and disarmament of militias; the identification process; and

06-20092 (E) 120106

the creation of conditions for holding free, fair and transparent elections. In this regard, the decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union established an International Working Group at the ministerial level to assist the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in implementing the peace process. It also established a day-to-day Mediation Group, composed of my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, the High Representative for the elections, the Special Envoy of South Africa, the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS and the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in Côte d'Ivoire.

5. By its resolution 1633 (2005) of 21 October 2005, the Security Council endorsed the decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. The resolution also elaborated on the mechanisms for implementing that decision and affirmed that the International Working Group and the Mediation Group would both be co-chaired by my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, Pierre Schori. The resolution also urged the Chairperson of the African Union, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, the Chairperson of ECOWAS, President Mamadou Tandja of Niger, and the African Union Mediator, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, to consult immediately with all the Ivorian parties in order to facilitate the appointment of a new Prime Minister. It stressed that the Prime Minister must have all the necessary powers and all the governmental financial, material and human resources to ensure the effective functioning of the Government and the implementation of the peace agreements.

6. The resolution also requested the International Working Group to draw up a road map for the implementation of all outstanding provisions of the peace agreements. It further noted that the mandate of the National Assembly would end on 16 December 2005, and requested the International Working Group to consult with all Ivorian parties on this issue.

III. Implementation of Security Council resolution 1633 (2005)

7. Following the adoption of Security Council resolution 1633 (2005), my Special Representative held a series of meetings with the Ivorian parties to explain the legal and political implications of the resolution for all national and international stakeholders. The resolution had envisaged the appointment of a new Prime Minister by 31 October, however, due to unforeseen circumstances unrelated to the peace process, the regional leaders who were mandated to facilitate the consultations with the Ivorian parties on this key issue did not travel to Côte d'Ivoire before that date.

8. The absence of a new Prime Minister as the mandate of President Gbagbo came to an end on 30 October resulted in a situation of uncertainty and heightened tensions in the country. On 30 October, President Gbagbo delivered an address to the nation in which he stated that he would remain in power in view of the continued occupation of part of the country by the Forces nouvelles. He further explained that his decision was based on a ruling made by the Constitutional Council on 29 October. The opposition parties and the Forces nouvelles rejected this interpretation and decided to suspend their participation in the Council of Ministers. Both the opposition and the ruling party organized rallies in Abidjan to underscore their respective positions on the expiry of the President's mandate. The Forces

nouvelles also organized demonstrations in Bouaké and other areas in the north demanding that President Gbagbo step down.

9. In order to help calm the situation, I issued a statement on 29 October calling on the Ivorian parties to exercise restraint. Based on consultations with Presidents Mbeki and Obasanjo, I explained in my statement that Prime Minister Seydou Diarra would remain in office until a new Prime Minister was appointed. I also appealed to the parties to cooperate with the international partners in implementing resolution 1633 (2005) in good faith.

10. The regional leaders subsequently held a series of consultations with the Ivorian parties on the appointment of a new Prime Minister. These consultations included a visit by President Obasanjo to Côte d'Ivoire on 4 November, during which the parties submitted a list of 16 candidates for the post, and a follow-up visit by Oluyemi Adeniji, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, which yielded a short-list of four candidates. Presidents Mbeki, Obasanjo and Tandja conducted further consultations with the parties in Abidjan on 22 November, but the parties did not reach agreement on a candidate acceptable to all. Presidents Mbeki and Obasanjo returned to Abidjan on 4 December for the final round of consultations, at the end of which they announced the appointment of Charles Konan Banny as the Prime Minister for the transition period.

11. Until his appointment, Mr. Banny was the Governor of the Central Bank for West African States. All Ivorian parties, including the Forces nouvelles and the ruling party, the Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI), welcomed his appointment. Shortly after the appointment was announced, former Prime Minister Seydou Diarra and the Government of National Reconciliation tendered their resignations. Mr. Banny was sworn into office on 7 December.

12. Following his appointment, the Prime Minister visited Niger, Nigeria and South Africa for consultations with the regional leaders. He also consulted extensively with all the Ivorian parties on the establishment of a new government, as well as with my Special Representative and members of the day-to-day Mediation Group on the next critical steps in the peace process. The formation of the new Government, which was announced on 28 December, paves the way for the implementation of the peace agreements.

13. As consultations on the appointment of the new Prime Minister were going on, the day-to-day Mediation Group and the International Working Group started to prepare the ground for the resumption of the implementation of outstanding tasks under the peace agreements. The Groups held their first meetings on 28 October and 8 November, respectively. Since then, the Mediation Group has held biweekly meetings, focused both on preparing for the meetings of the International Working Group and on defining practical modalities for monitoring the effective implementation of the road map.

14. At its inaugural meeting on 8 November, the International Working Group adopted its rules of procedure and discussed a draft road map for the new phase of the peace process based on resolution 1633 (2005). In the road map, new timelines for the expeditious implementation of the outstanding provisions of the peace agreement are proposed and key steps that should lead to the holding of free, fair and transparent elections are set out.

15. The Prime Minister attended the opening session of the second meeting of the International Working Group on 6 December, at which he pledged to focus, during his tenure, on rebuilding confidence among Ivorians and expressed his determination to move the peace process forward. In the communique issued at the end of the meeting, the Working Group assured the new Prime Minister of its full support and invited the Mediation Group to verify that he holds all powers and resources described in Security Council resolution 1633 (2005). With regard to the end of the mandate of the National Assembly on 16 December 2005, the International Working Group decided that, pending the convening of the Forum for National Dialogue envisaged in resolution 1633 (2005), all necessary legislation would be initiated by the Council of Ministers and submitted by the Prime Minister to the President for signature. The Mediation Group is pursuing consultations with the Ivorian parties on this issue, following calls for the mandate of the Assembly to be extended, which would be in contradiction of the recommendation of the Working Group.

16. At its 6 December meeting, the International Working Group further refined the draft road map for the implementation of the remaining aspects of the peace agreements, highlighting the key strategic areas and priorities for the transition period, including the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants; the disarmament and dismantling of militias; the redeployment of State administration; the identification process; elections; and the restoration of security throughout the country.

17. Preliminary estimates by the International Working Group, to be confirmed after consultations with the Prime Minister, indicate that the implementation of the road map would cost more than $280 million. The Mediation Group is expected to formally present the road map to the Prime Minister so that the transition government may take ownership of its implementation, with support from international partners.

18. Meanwhile, operational plans to address each of the above-mentioned priority areas are being developed. In this regard, detailed planning for the programme to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate some 48,000 combatants is ongoing. On 23 November, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) convened and participated in a meeting of experts on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration from the African Union, ECOWAS, the African Union Mediation, the Licorne forces and the World Bank to draw up a new schedule and develop modalities for the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme (see paras. 23 and 24 below). Similarly, the High Representative for the elections has been holding consultations on the outline of a plan for the electoral process, which is described in section IV below.

IV. Planning for the elections

19. The High Representative for the elections, Antonio Monteiro, has been consulting on the outline of an electoral schedule, which will form part of the road map for the overall peace process. On 30 November he presented a proposal on the outline to the Mediation Group. Under the proposal, the substantive work on the preparations for the elections was expected to commence by the end of December 2005, by which time the reconstituted Independent Electoral Commission was to

become fully operational. The development of the legal framework for the electoral operations, including the identification and registration of voters and the distribution of electoral identity cards, would begin once the Commission becomes fully operational and would be completed over a period of six months. The political campaigning by registered political parties and their candidates would take place during the three months before the elections in October 2006.

20. During this time, the Independent Electoral Commission has encountered internal problems, resulting in serious delays in the envisaged schedule. The reconstituted Independent Electoral Commission was sworn into office on 17 October, but it has not been able to function as some members are boycotting it, protesting the procedures followed when its bureau was elected on 19 October.

21. The Front Populaire Ivoirien, the ruling party, took the dispute to the Supreme Court, which, on 25 November, nullified the election of the Commission's bureau. The High Representative is consulting with the parties and the Prime Minister on ways of resolving the dispute. He has reported to the International Working Group, which, in its communiqué of 6 December, expressed its full support for his initiative and affirmed that, if necessary, his arbitration powers should be invoked to assist in the constitution of the bureau.

22. Meanwhile, in preparation for its support to the electoral process, UNOCI has deployed four electoral coordinators and 83 electoral advisers to 14 regional electoral offices throughout Côte d'Ivoire. The UNOCI Electoral Division is also developing a plan for supporting the Independent Electoral Commission once it becomes operational. The Division coordinates closely with the High Representative and extends technical advice to him. However, the office of the High Representative continues to face severe financial constraints. To date the trust fund established by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support the work of the High Representative has not received any contributions from donors. In this regard, I would like to draw the attention of the Council to my letter of 3 November (S/2005/707), in which I appealed to Council members to contribute to the funding of the office of the High Representative.

V. Planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

23. At the expert meeting on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, held on 8 November 2005, specific recommendations were made to the Mediation Group aimed at facilitating ownership of the revised disarmament, demobilization and reintegration timetable by the newly appointed Prime Minister and by ex-belligerent forces. Those recommendations include: (a) the need to update the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration timetable at the monthly meetings of the International Working Group; (b) the adoption of measures for an immediate commencement of pre-cantonment of combatants and the disarmament and dismantling of the militias as soon as possible, as called for by Security Council resolution 1633 (2005); (c) the creation of a task force to monitor and support the process of dismantling and disarmament of the militia groups; (d) the creation of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration team coordinated by UNOCI and comprising representatives of the African Union, ECOWAS, the African Union Mediation, the World Bank and the Licorne forces. This team would serve as a

forum for exchange of information and would facilitate the development of a concerted and integrated approach to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in Côte d'Ivoire.

24. With regard to the financing of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, the World Bank has confirmed its commitment to provide the Government of Côte d'Ivoire with a grant of $80 million, conditional, however, on the establishment of a system for receiving and disbursing the funds and the payment by the Government of $204 million in arrears.

VI. Security situation

25. During the period under review, the potential for violent disturbances remained very high throughout most of the country. Despite the semblance of calm following the appointment of the new Prime Minister, underlying tensions arising from a number of factors remained a source of deep concern. The main threats to security and stability throughout the country were: the combatants who are yet to disarm; ethnic and urban militias; extremist groups such as the Young Patriots; elements who feel disempowered by the post-October 2005 governance arrangements; the soaring crime rate; and continuing human rights abuses. There is a high risk of a major violent crisis and riots on the scale witnessed in Abidjan in November 2004. However, the overall assessment is that, despite persistent rumours of attacks, the probability of renewed direct conflict between the Forces armées nationales de Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) and the Forces nouvelles remains relatively low, which could be attributed in part to the effective disengagement measures established by UNOCI and the Licorne forces.

26. The rampant insecurity in Abidjan is linked to the possibility of violent street demonstrations and mob violence, organized crime, extortion and racketeering activities. There are persistent reports about hidden weapons in the capital. The movement of United Nations staff and the impartial forces has become increasingly difficult in areas where there is a concentration of Young Patriots, especially in the areas of Yopougon, Abobo and Adjame in Abidjan, as well as in some parts of the west of the country. Incidents of organized crime reported during this period involving the use of automatic weapons were directed mainly against the business community, particularly foreigners, as well as UNOCI staff members.

27. UNOCI has also reported an increase in violent acts against opposition political party leaders and some members of the armed forces. The recently-established Centre de commandement des opérations de sécurité and other security agencies have reportedly been involved in extortion and racketeering activities. Individuals resisting their demands for money have often been subjected to serious violations of human rights, including physical violence and unlawful arrest.

28. In the western part of the country, widespread incidents of targeted ethnic killings, perpetrated mainly by militia groups, continued to be reported. The fear of violence by militia groups was particularly prevalent in communities around Duékoué, Guiglo and Bangolo. Land disputes in the west also remain a major source of tension and violence. UNOCI and the impartial forces have continued to encounter obstruction of access to areas dominated by militia groups and the Young

Patriots, such as Gagnoa, Divo and Lakota. Militia groups have also targeted UNOCI equipment for attack, notably in Gagnoa and San Pedro, and have incited anti-United Nations sentiments.

29. During the reporting period, no major violent incidents occurred in the areas along the borders with Guinea and Liberia. There are however persistent reports about ongoing recruitment of former combatants from Liberia both by pro-Government forces and military elements of the Forces nouvelles based in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire. While there were rumours of an impending attack by unidentified elements from Guinea, which prompted the Forces nouvelles to conduct training exercises and place their fighters on alert, the attacks did not materialize.

30. In the zone of confidence, UNOCI reported recurrent infiltrations by both Forces nouvelles elements and the national defence and security forces. Some of these combatants, including those from the Forces nouvelles, were involved in banditry and other criminal activities in the zone.

31. In Sector East, the situation remained generally quiet compared to the western part of the country, although UNOCI reported an increase in racketeering and violent criminal activities involving highway robbers, as well as minor infiltrations into the zone of confidence. Tensions also grew in the town of Brobo, just north of the zone, where the local population protested a decision putting the town under the control of the Forces nouvelles in September, requiring UNOCI's intervention. The mission further reported emerging rifts within both the FANCI and the Forces nouvelles, with the lower-level cadres turning against their leadership. In one incident, on 30 October, the Forces nouvelles commander of the military zone of Mankolo, in the north-west of the country, was severely beaten by his own troops who accused him of neglecting them.

VII. Deployment of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

A. Force deployment

32. As of 20 December 2005, UNOCI's troop strength stood at 6,891 out of the authorized strength of 7,090, including 200 military observers. The shortfall in the Mission's troop levels is due to the non-availability of a military aviation unit, whose deployment the Security Council approved in its resolution 1528 (2004). Efforts to find a Member State prepared to provide this critical unit are still ongoing.

33. Troops are deployed in two sectors, with sector headquarters in Bouaké and Daloa, respectively, with the force headquarters in Abidjan. Most troops are concentrated along both sides of the zone of confidence. Their main activities include: ensuring security of United Nations personnel and installations throughout the country; monitoring the zone to prevent hostilities and ceasefire violations; conducting robust patrols of their areas of deployment to prevent ethnic clashes or violence against the civilian population; establishing permanent liaison with FANCI and the Forces nouvelles to build confidence; monitoring international borders to prevent the movement of arms and combatants, as well as to monitor the movements of refugees; and providing security for personalities engaged in the peace process.

In addition, 200 military observers, deployed in 17 different sites, conducted systematic patrols to monitor the security situation throughout the country.

34. UNOCI troops and military observers also continued to enforce the arms embargo against Côte d'Ivoire, in keeping with Security Council resolution 1584 (2005). During the period under review, the Mission conducted 144 arms embargo inspections in areas both held by the Government and by the Forces nouvelles. The mission also monitored key airports and seaports for any illegal transportation of arms and equipment. No major violations of the embargo controls were recorded.

35. The additional battalion authorized by the Security Council in its resolution 1609 (2005) arrived in the mission area in late September 2005. The battalion comprises 650 troops from Bangladesh, including a riverine unit, and 200 special forces from Jordan. The riverine unit is deployed in Abidjan to carry out search and rescue missions and to assist in the evacuation of United Nations personnel in the event of a crisis. Pending the beginning of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, the rest of the Bangladeshi troops from this battalion are currently assigned to reinforce security in the areas around Yamoussoukro and to act as theatre reserve. One company is deployed in Abidjan to contribute to the security of United Nations personnel and installations. Once the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme begins, these troops will be redeployed to provide support for the implementation of the programme. The 200 special forces from Jordan are deployed in Abidjan where they carry out area domination operations and act as the mission's force reserve.

B. Police deployment

36. As of 20 December, the strength of the police component stood at 697, out of the authorized ceiling of 725, which includes 375 personnel of the three formed police units approved under Security Council resolution 1609 (2005). Difficulties continue to be encountered in recruiting the remaining francophone police officers required to perform specialist functions, in particular in the fields of training, ethics and discipline, reform and restructuring, criminal investigations, customs and border patrols and embargo monitoring.

37. Some 15 police officers, deployed at UNOCI headquarters in Abidjan, provide headquarters and administrative support to the teams deployed in the field. Another 39 police officers deployed in Abidjan have been providing training to 240 Ivorian gendarmes in such areas as community policing, human rights, forensics and traffic accident management.

38. Most UNOCI police officers are deployed in Sector East and Sector West where they provide basic training to 533 security auxiliaries recruited from the ranks of the Forces nouvelles and, south of the zone of confidence, monitor police activities and mentor Ivorian police officers. UNOCI has deployed civilian police officers to six additional sites, in Danane, Seguela, Ferkessedougou, Katiola, Bouna and Beoumi, to monitor police activities and provide mentoring for the newly trained security auxiliaries assigned to work in these areas.

39. The mission's three formed police units (two from Jordan, which arrived in the mission area on 5 and 22 August, and one from Bangladesh, which arrived on 9 October 2005) are deployed in Abidjan, Daloa and Bouaké to protect United

Nations personnel and assets. They carry out routine patrolling along with the United Nations police officers, escort United Nations personnel travelling to sensitive areas, respond to emergency or distress calls by United Nations personnel and provide security protection at United Nations installations.

C. Sous-Groupement de Sécurité

40. In keeping with Security Council resolution 1528 (2004), the 206 United Nations personnel of the Sous-Groupement de Sécurité are deployed in Abidjan to provide security, in coordination with the Ivorian authorities, for the ministers of the Government of National Reconciliation and the signatories of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

41. In view of the tense security situation in Abidjan, UNOCI continues to receive further requests for close protection by the Sous-Groupement de Sécurité, including from representatives of international stakeholders in the peace process. During most of the reporting period, demands on UNOCI increased to the point that the Sous-Groupement was providing close and residence protection to 39 dignitaries, which is over its capacity. This figure will be reviewed now that the new government has been formed.

VIII. Review of the strength of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

42. In its decision of 6 October 2005, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union requested the United Nations Security Council to consider increasing UNOCI's strength substantially. The Security Council, in paragraph 22 of its resolution 1633 (2005), took note of this request and expressed its intention to review the troop levels of UNOCI at the end of the Mission's mandate on 24 January 2006. In this connection, the Secretariat sent a technical team to UNOCI in November 2005 to assess the Mission's troop and police strength, taking into account the new circumstances emanating from Security Council resolution 1633 (2005).

43. The technical team noted that, given the steady deterioration of the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire following the Government's air raids on Forces nouvelles positions and the subsequent violent disturbances in Abidjan in November 2004, I had recommended, in my third, fourth and fifth progress reports on UNOCI, that the Council should strengthen the mission by two additional battalions. One of these battalions was to reinforce the security arrangements in Abidjan while the other was to support disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities. Through its resolution 1609 (2005), the Security Council approved only the deployment of the latter battalion, as mentioned in paragraph 35 above.

44. The technical team conducted a troop-to-task assessment, which confirmed that UNOCI troops are thinly stretched throughout the country. In this regard, it will be recalled that during the disturbances of November 2005, the Mission had to redeploy three infantry companies from their parent battalions in the sectors to reinforce the security arrangements in Abidjan. These companies have remained in Abidjan, leaving the affected parent battalions severely depleted. The battalions

have the capacity to patrol only the main population centres and monitor the principal entry and exit points to the zone of confidence.

45. The troop-to-task assessment further found that in Abidjan the six infantry companies drawn from different contingents, as explained above, are also overstretched. They provide area security, armed escorts to convoys, protection around some 10 United Nations locations throughout the city and United Nations air assets and conduct arms embargo inspections. The newly arrived Jordanian special forces company serves as the mission's force reserve, which was assessed as small for a mission the size of UNOCI. The United Nations integrated security contingency plan for Abidjan also requires that, in the event of major security disturbances, the six infantry companies secure zones around 10 assembly areas and four concentration points, as well as the resupply and evacuation routes.

46. The technical team looked into the implications of the new circumstances arising from Security Council resolution 1633 (2005) for the operations of UNOCI. In this regard, it noted that the resolution stipulates that the concomitant implementation of the outstanding tasks from the peace agreements, including the identification process, the cantonment of forces, the disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation of combatants and the dismantling and disarmament of militias, would expedite the creation of conditions for holding free, fair, open and transparent elections. UNOCI's initial planning, prior to the adoption of resolution 1633 (2005), had provided for the sequential implementation of these critical tasks. This would have allowed UNOCI to redeploy its troops, once one task was completed, to meet the requirements for the implementation of subsequent successive tasks. The troop-to-task assessment ascertained that the concurrent implementation of these tasks would create a serious surge in the military, police and civilian support personnel required on the ground, which would be very difficult, if not impossible, to manage within existing resources.

47. The technical team also discussed with UNOCI possible measures to rationalize the current configuration of troops. In this regard, it concluded that the structure of the Mission's signals company could be adjusted by combining its logistic support with that of other units. This would reduce the strength of the company by 40 per cent. The team, noting that the continued lack of a military aviation unit severely hampers the mission's operational effectiveness, suggested adjusting the required capabilities of the unit, which may make it possible to identify a Member State prepared to provide such a unit.

Recommendations

A. Military strength

48. In the light of the above findings, it is recommended that UNOCI's troop strength be increased by four battalions (3,400 troops), with the commensurate increase in civilian staffing to support this deployment. Firstly, the mission still needs the additional battalion requested in my previous reports, particularly in light of the volatile security situation and the possibility that another major violent crisis might occur. This battalion would relieve the infantry companies redeployed to reinforce security in Abidjan in November 2004. Secondly, the implementation of the road map developed by the International Working Group of the African Union on the basis of Security Council resolution 1633 (2005) requires an additional three

battalions. As explained in paragraph 45 above, these three battalions would provide a secure environment for the concomitant implementation of the remaining tasks under the peace agreements. It should be noted that, in developing its recommendations, the technical team ascertained that no additional support to UNOCI can be expected from the Licorne forces beyond the current arrangements, especially in the event of a violent crisis.

49. The technical team explored several options for generating the proposed additional troops, including the arrangements envisaged under Security Council resolution 1609 (2005), which authorized the temporary redeployment of troops from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to strengthen UNOCI. The team travelled to UNMIL to study the feasibility of this option. Following detailed discussions, both the team and UNMIL concluded that, in the event of a crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, a short notice reinforcement of UNOCI from UNMIL would not be feasible, primarily due to the long time it would take to obtain the consent of the concerned troop-contributing countries and to prepare the troops for redeployment. Moreover, the only force element in UNMIL capable of reacting with sufficient speed is the Mission's reserve, known as the Quick Reaction Force. This force comprises a joint Irish/Swedish battalion and UNMIL has already earmarked it to backstop the guard force deployed at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

50. The study also determined that reinforcement from UNMIL for pre-planned tasks, for instance to provide a secure environment for the identification process, voter registration and the elections, may be possible, subject to the consent of the concerned troop-contributing countries. In this regard, it is recommended that one of the proposed four additional battalions would be redeployed from UNMIL for a limited period of time. This battalion and two others would be deployed as required, only for the duration of the pre-planned tasks that would be implemented simultaneously as explained above. Consequently, they would be repatriated as the surge requirements decrease and as the removal of the zone of confidence frees more troops for redeployment to perform other tasks after the completion of the disarmament and demobilization of combatants. It is worth noting however that UNMIL emphasized that the proposed temporary redeployment of any of its troops to reinforce UNOCI should not occur before March 2006 due to the uncertain political and security situation in Liberia.

51. It is also recommended that the structure of the mission's signals company be adjusted along the lines explained in paragraph 47 above. In addition, the Secretariat will adjust the initially stipulated capabilities of the required aviation unit, in the hope that troop-contributing countries would find it easier to provide a unit with lesser capabilities.

B. Police strength

52. With regard to the UNOCI police component, it is recommended that three additional formed police units (375 officers) and 100 civilian police officers be deployed to the mission immediately. The latter would mentor the 533 security auxiliaries trained by the United Nations police and observe the police situation in the areas currently controlled by the Forces nouvelles. The security auxiliaries will be deployed to 54 locations in the northern part of the country, which have been left without any law enforcement presence following the displacement of some 4,000 police and gendarmes by the conflict. There are currently 110 United Nations

police officers deployed in this area and in the zone of confidence. The additional 100 officers would be deployed along those already assigned to the north, bringing the total strength of police officers in this area to 210, thus ensuring effective mentoring.

53. One of the three additional formed police units would be deployed in Abidjan to strengthen the Mission's non-lethal capacity to respond to threats to United Nations personnel and the sites where United Nations offices are located. The other two would be deployed to Sector West and Sector East. UNOCI has to deploy personnel to more sites in the two sectors to support the concomitant implementation of the remaining tasks under the peace agreements. In order to provide adequate security protection at these sites and for the movement of United Nations personnel as they carry out their work, these new formed police units, based in Yamassoukro and Daloa, would also reinforce security coverage of the volatile western region of the country where the militia groups are very active.

IX. Humanitarian situation

54. During the period under review, the humanitarian community, with logistical support from UNOCI, facilitated the voluntary return of some 2,000 internally displaced persons from Duékoué to their areas of origin in the zone of confidence. The return process has been particularly successful in the village of Fengolo, in the western part of the zone, to which more than 1,000 internally displaced persons have returned. Humanitarian organizations, UNOCI and the impartial forces have launched joint efforts to rebuild social cohesion and support community development in this area.

55. Reports of spontaneous return of internally displaced persons in other parts of the western region demonstrate that security conditions have somewhat improved. However, due to the uncertain security situation and inadequate services in the areas of return, some families have returned from their villages to the town of Duékoué. Continued provision of basic services and improved security conditions are essential to ensure the sustainability of the process of returning internally displaced persons, in particular in rural areas.

56. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) resumed support for the voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees following the completion of the electoral process in Liberia. As of 6 December, UNHCR has assisted the return of 12,796 refugees to Liberia. An estimated 19,500 refugees have returned on their own.

57. With regard to education, the Government is yet to assume its responsibility for organizing national school examinations in the Forces nouvelles-controlled areas, which were postponed several times in September and October 2005. UNOCI has strongly condemned the politicization of the issue of national examinations as a violation of children's rights and international humanitarian law.

58. Between 11 and 14 November 2005, the Ministry of Health, in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), carried out a fourth round of polio vaccinations, immunizing five million children under the age of five. As a result of these and earlier campaigns,

there has been a significant improvement in the prevention of poliomyelitis and measles and the coverage rate for vaccinations in the country has increased.

X. Economic and social situation

59. As noted in my last report, the gross domestic product (GDP) of Côte d'Ivoire is estimated to have increased by 1.6 per cent in 2004. For 2005, the forecast is for a modest increase of a maximum of 1 per cent over the figures for 2004. This is largely due to the faltering peace process, the volatile security situation and the lack of external support. Coffee and cocoa production continued to decline by an estimated 20 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively, during the first nine months of 2005, compared to the same period in 2004. However, gas production has increased by 13 per cent compared to 2004. Meanwhile, a 3 per cent increase in the rate of inflation is predicted at the end of 2005.

60. In addition, the budget deficit has increased by about $18.5 million as a result of the continuing use of deficit financing to bear the cost of war-related activities. Public sector investment fell by more than 50 per cent in 2005. Notwithstanding the ongoing discussions with the Bretton Woods institutions, Côte d'Ivoire continues to be in non-accrual status vis-à-vis the World Bank and the conclusion of a post-conflict programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) remain conditional, inter alia, on the implementation of a successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and the restoration of public administration and security. This situation may jeopardize the financing of key components of the road map, such as the disarmament programme, as mentioned in paragraph 24 above.

XI. Human rights

61. Despite the tension prevailing in the country, no widespread inter-ethnic confrontations or attacks were recorded during the reporting period. However, UNOCI received reports of serious human rights violations, many of which were politically or ethnically motivated. These were perpetrated by armed and unarmed militia on both sides of the Ivorian conflict. UNOCI continued to issue public reports on the human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire. The third such report was issued on 13 October 2005. It described incidents of egregious human rights violations and the reluctance of the authorities on either side of the zone of confidence to conduct criminal investigations into cases brought to their attention.

62. UNOCI held several meetings with senior military and civilian officials throughout Côte d'Ivoire to discuss the deplorable human rights situation and to urge them to take the necessary steps to end impunity for human rights violations. In collaboration with local non-governmental organizations working in the field of human rights and with funding from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNOCI initiated a programme to strengthen the capacity of national human rights groups to raise human rights awareness among the population. The mission also supported these groups and the Government in organizing events to mark the International Human Rights Day on 10 December 2005.

63. My Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide visited Côte d'Ivoire from 29 November to 3 December 2005. In his report, which was shared with the Security Council, he expressed concern about reports of serious and massive violations of human rights targeting civilians based on their ethnicity, religion and/or national origin. In this regard, he noted that tensions in the country and the mobilization of ethnic group identities for political ends could lead to further serious human rights violations. He urged all national actors openly to agree to a code of conduct that would include a commitment to refrain from fuelling intercommunal tensions and expressed strong support for the urgent strengthening of UNOCI's forces, which would increase the mission's capacity to provide a minimum of protection to civilians.

XII. Gender

64. UNOCI's gender-mainstreaming activities continued to focus on strengthening local capacity, induction training for new personnel and gender training for UNOCI staff and 533 Forces nouvelles recruits who are to be involved in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. The mission also undertook sensitization activities with regard to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) to mark the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the resolution. The UNOCI Gender Unit also participated in training on sexual exploitation and abuse issues to include a gender perspective focusing on the social and economic impact of the conflict on women and girls in Côte d'Ivoire.

XIII. HIV/AIDS

65. UNOCI continued to mainstream HIV/AIDS issues into the mission's activities and to implement outreach projects with the collaboration of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in order to reduce the risk of peacekeepers contracting or of spreading HIV. Risk reduction activities included HIV/AIDS awareness sessions, the training of 144 additional peer educators, voluntary confidential counselling and testing of awareness, as well as focus group surveys on HIV/AIDS within battalions and civilian personnel. UNOCI has also developed a strong working and technical relationship with the Ministry for the Fight against AIDS, networks of non-governmental organizations and other international organizations.

XIV. Child protection

66. In cooperation with UNICEF, UNOCI has made considerable progress in mainstreaming children's concerns into the mission's activities, including through the training of peacekeepers and the provision of guidance on violations listed in Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005) to all heads of sections and units, including the military components. UNOCI's continued partnership with UNICEF and other agencies focused on the establishment of a viable monitoring and reporting mechanism in application of resolution 1612 (2005). With regard to the demobilization of child soldiers, the Forces nouvelles submitted an action plan to the United Nations agreeing to end the use of child soldiers, in compliance with Security Council resolution 1539 (2004).

67. Meanwhile, the dialogue continues with identified militia groups to end the use of child soldiers in areas under the control of the Government. Four pro-government militia groups in the west (Guiglo) have so far submitted a list of 150 children for demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration and UNICEF and a national non-governmental organization (Afrique Secours Assistance) have signed an agreement to demobilize and reintegrate 200 children in Guiglo. An effective end to the use of child soldiers by pro-government militia groups depends on the ability to identify these groups, which in turn requires the full involvement and support of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire.

XV. Personnel conduct and discipline

68. Maintaining the discipline of personnel in the mission area continues to be a priority for my Special Representative. The recently created Conduct and Discipline Team in the mission is now in place to continue to receive allegations of misconduct by personnel. The team cooperates with the Office for Internal Oversight Services in the investigation of all Category 1 misconduct matters. Currently, sexual exploitation and abuse-related investigations have been completed at mission level, and proceedings are ongoing against 15 military officers and several contingent members.

XVI. Financial implications

69. By its resolutions 59/16 B of 22 June 2005 and 60/17 of 23 November 2005, the General Assembly appropriated a total amount of $418.8 million for the maintenance of UNOCI for the period from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006.

70. Financial resources approved by the General Assembly for UNOCI provide for the increased military and United Nations police strength of 7,090 military personnel and up to 725 police personnel, including three formed police units, authorized by the Security Council in its resolution 1609 (2005).

71. Should the Security Council decide to increase the military and police strength of UNOCI as recommended in paragraphs 48 to 53 above, I shall seek additional resources for the mission from the General Assembly. Financial implications arising from the proposed increase will be submitted to the Council in a subsequent addendum to the present report, to be submitted shortly.

72. As at 30 November 2005, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNOCI amounted to $109.6 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $1,988.3 million.

73. As at 30 November 2005, amounts owed to the UNOCI troop and formed police contributors totalled $16.1 million. Reimbursement of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the period up to 30 September 2005 in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

XVII. Observations

74. The 6 October 2005 decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, followed by the adoption of Security Council resolution 1633 (2005) and the efforts of the regional leaders played a crucial role in preventing a dangerous political and security crisis that was anticipated at the end of President Gbagbo's mandate on 30 October. These decisions have given the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire a new lease on life. The Ivorian parties must seize this unique opportunity and implement the decision of the African Union and Security Council resolution 1633 (2005) fully and in earnest.

75. In this regard, I warmly welcome the appointment of Charles Konan Banny as Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire for the transition period and the formation of his Government. These are, however, only the first steps towards implementing the resolution. The challenges ahead are formidable and urgent. Much time has been lost and the situation brooks no further delays. All Ivorian parties must therefore extend full and unconditional cooperation to the Prime Minister and his Government and move expeditiously to start the process of implementing the outstanding tasks under the peace agreements, including the disarmament programme; the dismantling and disarmament of militias; the redeployment of State administration; the identification of nationals; the registration of voters; and the organization of free, fair, open and transparent elections.

76. The International Working Group and the Mediation Group established by the African Union have already taken highly commendable and timely steps to develop a draft road map for the transition period. I urge the Prime Minister to work with the two groups and to finalize the road map expeditiously. It is also essential to convene, as soon as possible, the Forum for National Dialogue, as proposed in the decision of the African Union. The primary objective of that forum must be to unite all the national stakeholders behind the Prime Minister and the International Working Group, in order to ensure the full implementation of the outstanding tasks.

77. I am deeply concerned about the artificially created dispute within the Independent Electoral Commission, which has impeded its effective functioning. Political bickering by the members of the Commission and those behind them will not only cause delays in the electoral process, but could also seriously undermine the credibility of this important body. I call upon the political parties to work with the Prime Minister and the High Representative for the elections in resolving this dispute. In this regard, I fully support the view of the International Working Group that, if need be, the High Representative should invoke his arbitration authority to decisively settle the matter.

78. The dangerous confrontation over the mandate of the National Assembly, which expired on 16 December, and the unjustifiable attempts to prolong the mandate in defiance of the decision of the International Working Group are very disturbing. The interim arrangement decided upon by the Working Group, under which legislation should be initiated by the Council of Ministers and signed by the President, pending further consultations with the Ivorian parties, including the Forum for National Dialogue, is consistent with Security Council resolution 1633 (2005) and must be respected by all parties.

79. The effective implementation of the road map for the transition period requires that the Ivorian parties fully comply with their obligations under the various peace

agreements. In particular, apart from implementing the remaining tasks in good faith, they must respect the human rights of the Ivorian people, guarantee the freedom of movement of the impartial forces throughout the country and play their role in creating an enabling environment for the holding of free, fair and transparent elections.

80. In this regard, the parties should be reminded that the Mediation Group, the International Working Group and the Security Council will be carefully monitoring and reporting on all cases of obstruction of the overall peace process, including incitement to hatred and violence, human rights violations, obstruction of the freedom of movement of the impartial forces and violations of the arms embargo. I also urge the Security Council to consider imposing targeted measures against individuals and groups who may be cited by the Working Group in this regard. The political leaders should put the national reconciliation and peace process above their short-term considerations; history will judge harshly those who do otherwise.

81. In order to address the volatile security situation in Côte d'Ivoire and the accompanying human rights violations, and to ensure effective and dynamic support for the implementation of its 6 October decision, which was endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1633 (2005), the Peace and Security Council of the African Union requested the United Nations Security Council to consider reinforcing UNOCI's strength. In this regard, the technical team sent to UNOCI by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in November 2005 confirmed the need to strengthen the mission as explained in section VII of the present report. I therefore urge the Security Council to approve the recommendations contained in paragraphs 48 to 53 above. The Security Council's strong political determination to move the Ivorian peace process forward, as expressed in its resolution 1633 (2005), must be matched by a commensurate reinforcement of UNOCI so that the goals the Council set in that resolution can be met. In this regard, it is also worth noting that a number of the key tasks that UNOCI is mandated to support are expected to start in the very beginning of 2006. It is therefore important for the Council to consider these recommendations expeditiously. I also recommend that the mission's mandate be extended for a period of 12 months, until 24 January 2007, to adequately cover the post-election period.

82. The effective implementation of the road map drawn up by the International Working Group, especially the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and the electoral process, will require financial support from the international community. Member States are expected to contribute generously towards funding for these key components of the peace process. I am also very concerned about the lack of funding for the office of the High Representative for the elections and urge the Security Council and the General Assembly to consider authorizing funding the office from assessed contributions.

83. The encouraging developments in Côte d'Ivoire during the reporting period would not have been possible without the untiring efforts of the regional leaders, in particular Presidents Mbeki, Obasanjo and Tandja. I am very grateful to them for these efforts, which complement the work of the United Nations in Côte d'Ivoire. I would also like to express my deep appreciation for the invaluable support that the Licorne forces continue to extend to UNOCI.

84. In conclusion, I would like to commend my Special Representative, Pierre Schori, and the civilian and military staff of UNOCI for their determined efforts in

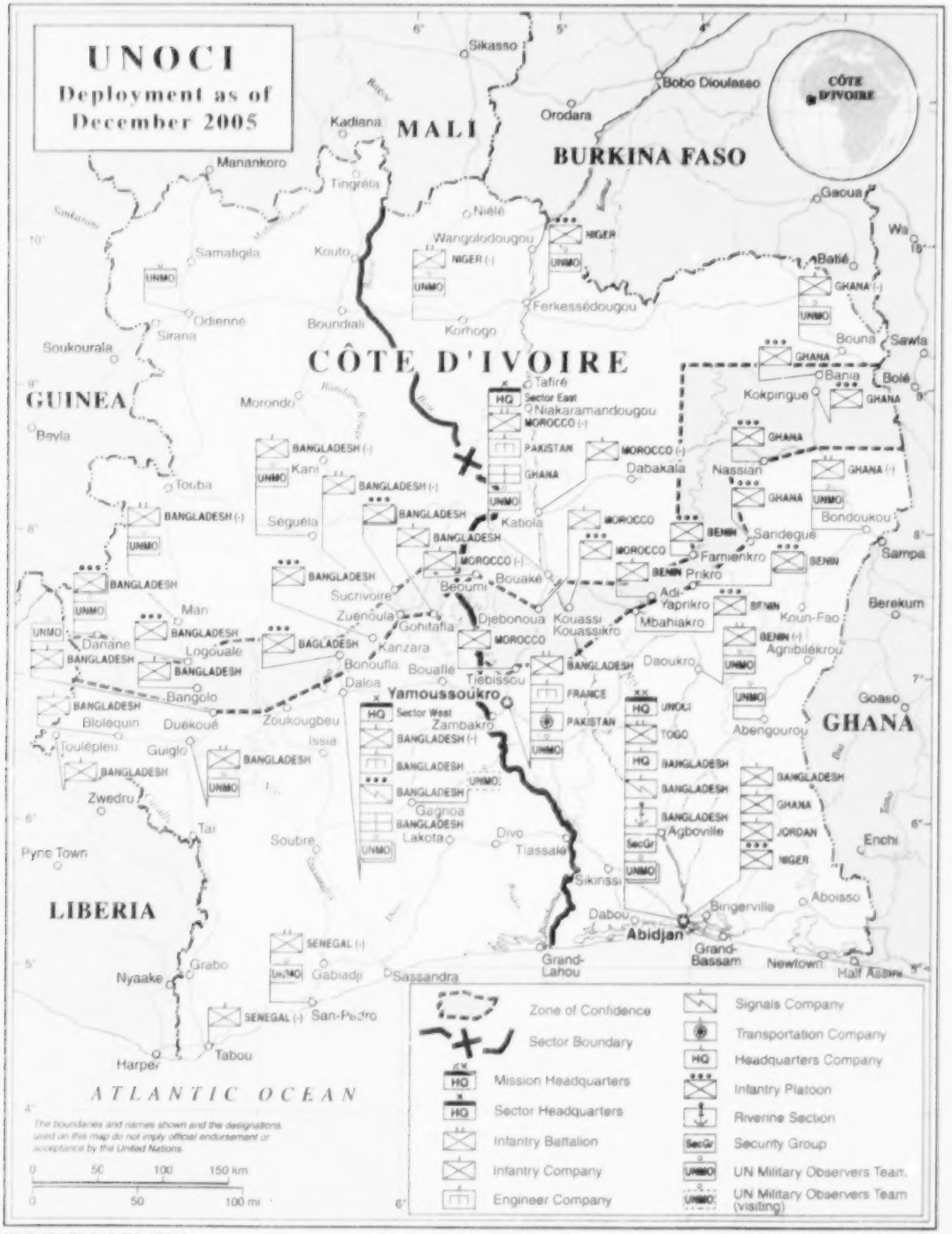
support of the search for sustainable peace in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the High Representative for the elections, Antonio Monteiro. Similarly, I would like to express my gratitude to the United Nations country team, humanitarian and development organizations and bilateral donors, as well as the countries that are contributing troops and police personnel to the mission, and to the African Union and ECOWAS for their contribution to the peace process.

Annex

United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire: military and police strength as at 13 December 2005

Country	Military component				Police
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total	
Argentina					3
Bangladesh	10	9	3 473	3 492	135
Benin	9	7	304	320	27
Bolivia	3			3	
Brazil	5	3		8	
Central African Republic					3
Cameroon					53
Canada					9
Chad	3			3	6
China	7			7	
Congo	5			5	
Croatia	3			3	
Djibouti					40
Dominican Republic	4			4	
Ecuador	2			2	
El Salvador	3			3	1
France	2	15	171	188	10
Guatemala	5			5	
Ghana	6	6	397	409	1
Gambia	5	1		6	
Guinea	4			4	
India	8			8	11
Ireland	2			2	
Jordan	7	10	199	216	252
Kenya	5	4		9	
Madagascar					2
Morocco	1	2	730	733	
Namibia	3			3	
Nepal	3			3	
Niger	6	3	364	373	34
Nigeria	5			5	17
Pakistan	10	10	364	384	
Paraguay	9	2		11	
Peru	3			3	

Country	Military observers	Military component			Police
		Staff officers	Troops	Total	
Poland	2			2	
Philippines	4	1		5	11
Republic of Moldova	4			4	
Romania	5			5	
Russian Federation	11			11	
Senegal	8	10	313	331	42
Serbia	3			3	
Sri Lanka					1
Togo	6	4	292	302	1
Tunisia	2	1		3	
Turkey					23
Uruguay	2	1		3	9
Uganda	2	2		4	
Vanuatu					4
Yemen	5			5	2
Zambia	1			1	
Total	**193**	**91**	**6 607**	**6 891**	**697**



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